

Berlin's Public Transit Authority BVG: From object of hate to «cool cat» on social media.

DOMO

Legendary coach Toni Nadal on methods, leadership and learning. And on tennis, Federer and his own nephew Rafa.

Uncle Toni

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«Nice words won't get you anywhere.»



Toni Nadal at the Rafa Nadal Academy in Manacor, Spain. «When Rafael was young, we often played a game up to 20 points. Most of the time, I'd let Rafael lead until the match point, only to win after all.»

Tough love. That's how Toni Nadal shaped his nephew Rafa Nadal into one of the best tennis players of all time. «Only hard characters can deal with big challenges.» In his interview with DOMO, «Uncle Toni» explains why he did not make a cent off Rafa. And how you can become one of the world's top contenders. Not only in tennis.

Interview: Alejandro Velert Photos: Dirk Schmidt

Photos: dpa picture-alliance/Keystone

Toni Nadal, I hear your German is pretty good. Could we do the interview in German?

(In German) No. I don't want you to think I'm an idiot.

How did you come to speak German?

I learned the language at university. Also, I once had a German girlfriend, and of course I often got to talk to Germans on the tennis courts.

Your protégé Rafa Nadal was only 19 years old when he won his first Grand Slam tournament in 2005. You must have fairly burst with pride.

After he'd won the final against Mariano Puerta, I left him a letter in his hotel. It listed everything he had done wrong during the tournament.

That's brutal.

We no longer had to work on the present, that was already done. You always need to think about the future. I also gave Rafael a list of all the Spanish players who had won only one Grand Slam in their career. And I asked him if he wanted to be one of them or if he wanted to achieve more.

You trained your nephew from an early age. Can you turn a child into a star?

Many coaches think so, but it's not true. The child must want to be a champion, that is the most important thing. And he must want to learn. What you are shown in life is not important. All that matters is what you learn.

What can be learned, what can't?

Almost anything can be learned. But what is even more important is that everything can be improved. The problem is that many people nowadays don't have the perseverance this requires.

Why is that?

Many people get frustrated too quickly when they don't succeed at something. And many people are not prepared to change their habits and do things as well as possible. Which always amazes me. It seems perfectly logical to me that you want to get better every day.

Maybe it's easier said than done.

No. Those who pay attention to detail improve automatically. The question is, up to what level. In



terms of tennis: Doing things like Federer is very difficult.

Rafa Nadal has become one of the best tennis players in history. Did you have a master plan?

I don't complicate things in life or sport and I prefer to work with logic and common sense. What I expect is commitment, respect for everyone and everything. And high demands on yourself. What struck me at an early stage was that successful people work to get a lot of opportunities. And that is something you can achieve with a well-developed personality.

How does a well-developed personality behave?

Such a person will behave properly. Not only in the sense that they behave decently. But properly in terms of necessity. First, you have to be honest about facing reality, which is particularly hard.

Why is it so hard to face reality?

Because it is painful. Before one of the first games Rafael played against Roger Federer, it was the finals in Monte Carlo 2006, I told my nephew what Federer could do better. And that was pretty much

A sports-minded family: Toni Nadal (at left) was one of Spain's top 30 tennis players and won the Balearic Islands junior table tennis championships. Toni Nadal's brother, Miguel Ángel, played soccer for Barcelona and appeared in 62 matches on Spain's national soccer team. Pictured here, Toni and Rafa in 2000.

everything. Rafa's response was quite angry.

Hardly surprising when you're discouraging your own player.

But it wouldn't have helped to lead him on. Because on the court, at the latest, he will face reality. Better if he knows it beforehand.

You might have encouraged him a bit so he'd feel upbeat going into the match.

Listen, in life, lying to other people is generally a bad idea. Because you hardly ever get away with it. And what's really dumb is lying to yourself. It's smarter to think about how you might win anyway.

And did he do that?

Yes, Rafael won in four sets. Because his spirit and commitment were outstanding and he played every point as if it were the last one.

What is the philosophy of your teaching at the Rafa Nadal Academy, where young talents train and learn?

We know that only very few will make it to the top. At the Academy, we therefore set high scholastic standards. If you don't meet them, you can't take part in tournaments.

The key thing is to shape the students' character. You need to be able to accept, endure and overcome great adversities in life and sport. Because luck and happenstance only very rarely help.

Do you think that young people are well prepared for life by the school system?

In my opinion, there is too much insistence on learning concepts. I think it is more important to shape characters that know how to deal with challenges.

How did you shape Rafa's character?

It was clear to me that what Rafael had set out to do would be very hard. So, we had to prepare for these hardships. The only way to do that is to toughen the player.

So, you gave him a hard time.

Yes. I often had him train with bad balls on bad courts. I extended the 90-minute training sessions over and over again - without comment. So he would develop stamina. We often played a game up to 20 points. Most of the time I'd let Rafael lead until the match point, only to win after all.

How did Rafa handle it?

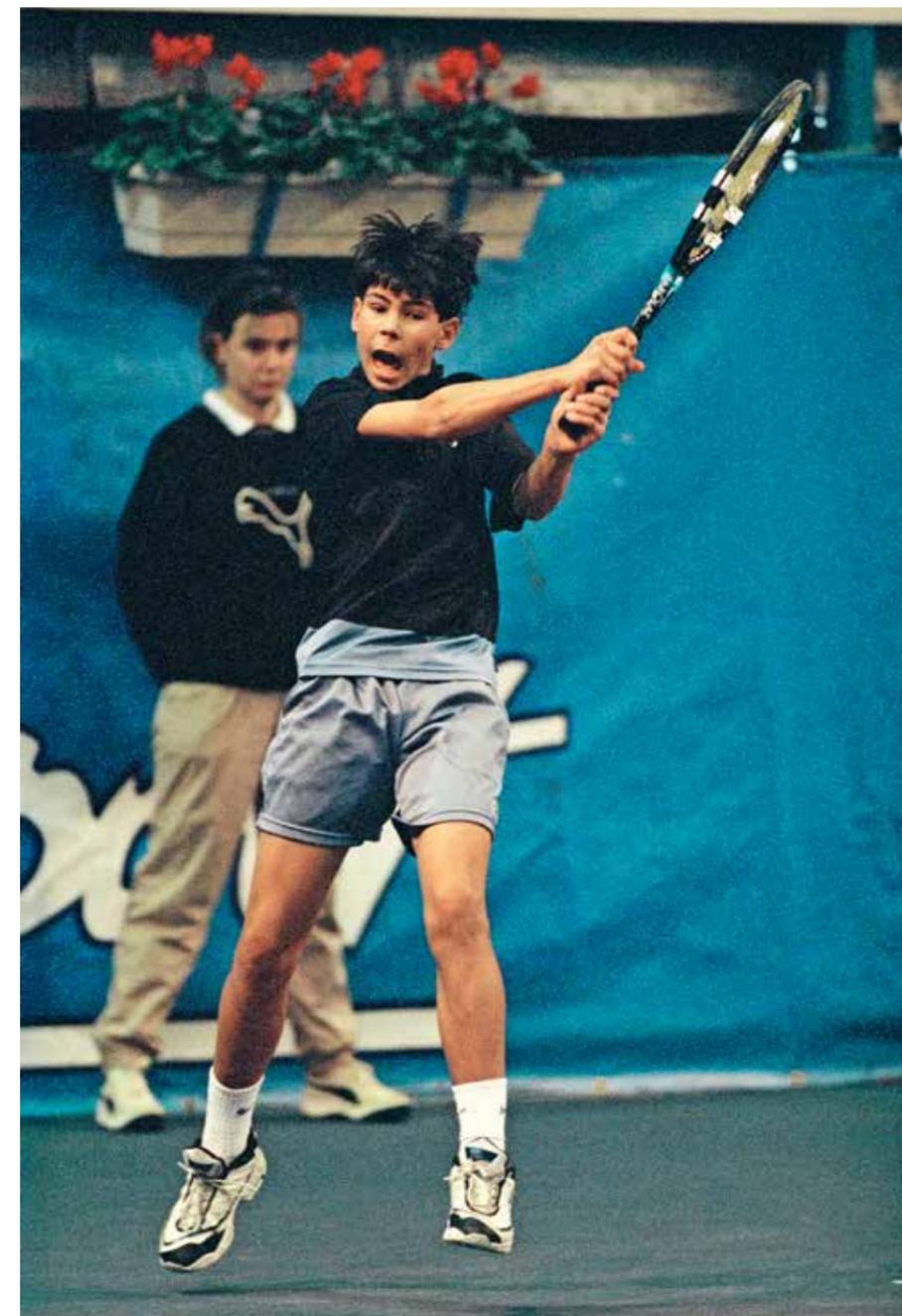
He was the best student you could imagine. Rafael was always very willing to learn, or I wouldn't have done it this way. But toughness and severity should never be a method, only a means. Over time, my high demands became his own. This is the best possible outcome. After all, a player should do something because I convinced him. Not because I demanded it.

Still, it's not easy for a child to understand that.

Goethe is said to have written that talent is formed in silence, while character is shaped in the tumult of the world. When you work hard, you form a hard character that considers challenges normal. That's something you can't achieve with nice words.

Do you run the risk of hurting or damaging a character by constantly insisting that their performance is not good enough?

Yes, there is that risk. That's why a coach needs to have a sense of when to push and when to hold back. When things didn't go well for Rafael or he doubted himself, I



motivated him and built him up. But when everything was going well, I asked him to work harder so we would continue to improve.

They say you even made Rafa, who is right-handed, left-handed!

That whole thing is a legend that won't go away. If only I'd had so much foresight! The fact is, until he was about ten years old, Rafael played forehand and backhand two-handed. When we started

Incomparable intensity - even as a teenager. At age 14, Rafa Nadal beat Wimbledon winner Pat Cash at an exhibition bout, and by age 15 he was listed as a professional.

playing the forehand with one hand, he did it with his left. That's how it came about. It's still amazing, though. Because otherwise he is pronouncedly right-handed.

Your nephew is generally described as being very decent and modest.

Character won't help you if you don't hit the balls. And that's what it's all about. Rafael has a great drive, a very good backhand and

Photos: Manuel Blondeau/Corbis Sport/Getty Images, Vida y Tennis/vidaytennis.com

can place the ball well from difficult positions like nobody else. And on top of that, he also has a good character! So much the better. Because we've always worked on that as well.

So, it's not just about hitting the balls well?

As I said, you always need to think about the future and the big picture. Bad behavior leads to problems. On the tennis court as in life. That's why I would never have tolerated Rafael throwing a racket away. Ergo, you had better work on your behavior. But Rafael is not necessarily modest.

What then?

It's not about modesty, it's about normality. Rafael knows he is an excellent tennis player. But nothing more. And he knows that he must not feel special because of that. It's the same with Federer. Rafael was always smart enough to let adults with life experience guide him at the right time. That's why fame and money never went to his head.

«What you are shown in life is not important. All that matters is what you learn.»

Toni Nadal

Is it true that when Rafa was a little boy, he thought you were a magician?

Yes, that was funny. I told him I had won the Tour de France six times, on a motorcycle! When we watched recordings of football matches, I pretended it was live and predicted what would happen. Or I told him I was invisible. Previously, I had told everyone to pretend I wasn't there. He long believed that I was a phenomenon.

You could even make rain.

Another wonderful episode (laughs). We drove to a tournament where all the other players were older boys. So, I told him I'd make it rain if he was losing badly. And it actually started raining during his



Photo: Clive Brunskill/Getty Images

Rafael Nadal in 2019 at the Monte Carlo Masters, where he won eleven of his 59 tournament victories on clay.

game. But he was in the lead and assured me that he had everything under control and I could stop the rain again!

Usually, the player is the boss, not the coach. With you, it was the other way round.

I was the boss until he was 16 or 17 years old. As an adult, I can't be

dependent on a little boy. After that, he was the one who set the course. What I have never done is to agree with him just because he is the boss.

The man with the money makes the rules.

He has never paid me, not a cent.

I beg your pardon?

If I had been dependent on his wages, I would have had to accept things I would not have wanted. I essentially bought my independ-

ence and freedom of speech by not taking any money.

How did you finance yourself and your family?

Rafael's father and I inherited a company from our father. He took care of this and any other family business, I took care of tennis. That's pretty much how we divided our duties.

«He's great in terms of esthetics and his technique is almost perfect»

Toni Nadal about Roger Federer



Can your methods also be applied to professional life? Does a boss in an office have to be tough?

I have never used hardness as a matter of principle. Moreover, in professional life, adults meet other adults, so there is more call for empathy. A boss should be able to empathize with people and their thinking. And demands and esteem should be in balance. You're on the right track when employees feel committed to the goals of the company. That's how you get the best performance from your staff.

Will you take offence if I call your attitudes a little old-fashioned?

Not at all. I know that young people nowadays usually operate differently.

What has changed?

We're living in a world where people primarily want to have fun and have a good time. Even the trainings should be fun and entertaining. But life isn't just about fun and entertainment. If you want to improve a stroke in tennis, you have to practice it a thousand times. That can be brutally monotonous. Those who constantly need a rewarding input or praise hardly improve.

How are you coping with the digital world?

I've always been interested in humanity. Throughout the history of mankind, new achievements



have tended to replace what was no longer essential for humans, such as muscle power. But the new technologies want to replace man's most important thing, his intellect. And that weakens us human beings.

In what way?

A tennis coach constantly needs to monitor and analyze every stroke and every movement. And subsequently, if necessary, to correct things. Nowadays, computers spit out countless statistics. The sharp eye of the coach is replaced and no longer trained. This is a problem for

The greatest rivalry, the greatest respect. Roger Federer (at left) and Rafa Nadal after the 2008 Wimbledon finals, arguably the best tennis match ever – which ended better for Rafa (top). At the 2019 Laver Cup team event in Geneva, they watch and cheer together.

me. Such developments are a danger to society. First and foremost in life are perseverance, diligence, renunciation, discipline and respect. Beyond that, I welcome technology.

In closing, let's get back to sports. Rafa Nadal lost his last duels against Federer, except on sand, and usually quite clearly. Is he no longer Federer's most feared opponent?

Federer has found a very effective system against Rafael that works well right now. I used to tell Rafael that in my opinion Federer was wrong about his style of playing. I

always felt that Federer should be much more aggressive with his return and speed up the pace of his playing. Instead, he let Rafael play and that should be avoided.

In this conversation, you have frequently referred to Federer as a good example. You like to watch him, don't you?

Very much, in fact. Because he's great in terms of esthetics and his technique is almost perfect. He's lucky in that he is basically able to do everything very well and still does. I used to like watching him even more than I do now. Like Rafael, he has changed his game so he can hit more and run less.

Looking back on all those years of working with your nephew: Would you do a lot of things differently or has most of it worked out?

I would do a lot differently. Only a stupid person wouldn't. But I also say: On Monday mornings, anyone can talk, because by then everyone knows the score. The bottom line is: I have worked according to my principles. Today, I might be less hard and demanding. But then, Rafael hasn't had such a bad time of it.

Biographical note

Antonio «Toni» Nadal was born in Manacor, Spain on February 22, 1961. He only began to play tennis at age 14 and did not quite manage to secure a professional career. He dropped out of law and history studies to run the Manacor tennis school. There, he began to coach his nephew Rafael Nadal when the boy was four years old. He remained Rafa's coach until 2017. Toni Nadal has three children and lives in Porto Cristo near Manacor. He runs the Rafa Nadal Academy for gifted young tennis players, has written two books («Nadal serves, Socrates returns», «Anything can be trained») and he is internationally in demand as a speaker.



Toni Nadal coached his nephew Rafa until 2017 and is considered to be the most successful coach in tennis history. Today, he runs the Rafa Nadal Academy in Manacor.

Photos: Decemeren Finney/Getty Images

Lippy like a Berlin bus driver

Berlin's public transit authority Berliner Verkehrsbetriebe (BVG) is the service the capital's inhabitants love to hate. On social media, however, they are one of the most successful companies – because they practice something most PR consultants advise against: irony. *By Vinzenz Greiner*



Imagine you are responsible for subway trains, trams and buses in the German capital. Imagine you are the Berliner Verkehrsbetriebe, BVG for short.

Your promise: Your product is clean, always on time, accurate. That's what you vow to one billion passengers a year! Done. Done?

The challenge: Unlike Deutsche Bahn, which runs the S-Bahn (local railway) in Berlin, you have to make a lot of money to cover rising costs, which increase at some three percent

per year. The best way to do this is by selling season tickets.

The problem: Berliners don't like you. The image of your company, as you freely admit, is that of a paunchy civil servant. Maybe even with sausage-roll crumbs in the corner of your mouth and a lousy mood. You break your product claim regarding the regular interval timetable. Your bus drivers snap at the passengers, tram services are cancelled, subway trains are dirty.

Your solution: You own your mis-

On equal terms: On social media and advertising posters (above, from a 2015 campaigns), BVG's language sometimes sounds like street slang: «Not even your mutha would pick you up at 4:30 a.m.»

takes and make a declaration of love to the Berliners. In 2015, you start the 2.8 million-euro promotional campaign «Because we love you». Particularly on social media.

The result: a shitstorm of hurricane proportions.

Today, the influential business weekly «Wirtschaftswoche» claims that BVG is «the cool cat» of public transport. BVG is considered one of the most successful German companies on social media. It has won over 30 awards, including a Cannes Lion.

Photos: Finn Kirchner

Almost 700,000 people follow the campaign accounts on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram – that makes almost one in five Berliners. In addition, there are dedicated service channels with tens of thousands of followers each.

Companies like Netflix cooperate with BVG because of their coverage. Others want to learn how this social media stuff actually works: organizations like the German Farmers' Association, but also electricity providers and banks wend their way to the BVG headquarters in an elon-

asks for a plan B. «We said: «We don't have one,» Büch remembers.

Plan A meant: «Be more laid-back and streetwise,» as Büch puts it. And above all: communicate with customers on their own terms. Be raw, mercilessly blunt, with black humor, sometimes at your own expense. In a word: with «Berliner Schnauze», Berlin lip.

And Berlin lip is what those people hear whom Frank Büch leads us to through an open-plan office: the BVG Call Center. Here, the in-house social media team minds one pillar

«We took into account that there might be a little shitstorm. But we never expected it to be so violent.»

Frank Büch, Head of Marketing BVG

gated brick building at Gleisdreieck in Berlin. DOMO also stopped by.

Inside, a man wearing a sailor's tan and a white smile matching his shirt leads us across linoleum floors past woodchip wallpaper. There is a sense of lumbering civil-servant-dom, the almost 90-year tradition of the BVG. «Its image hasn't always been good,» Frank Büch admits. But the Berliners and the BVG have always been closely linked, says the marketing manager, who is ultimately responsible for the social media. It was «like a longish marriage. A kind of love-hate relationship develops.» What would such couples do? Büch asks himself. His answer: «Remarry.»

That's how the idea for the declaration of love came about. But it rubs Berliners the wrong way: #weilwirdichlieben (becauseweloveyou) is ripped to shreds on the Internet when it comes out. Users twitter: «That is a love I can do without.» Germany's most important news platform writes that the charm offensive has backfired.

«We took into account that there might be a little shitstorm. But we never expected it to be so violent,» Büch explains. Even at the Gleisdreieck HQ, the mood soured: «At first, some employees said: «This is no longer the BVG I know.» The board

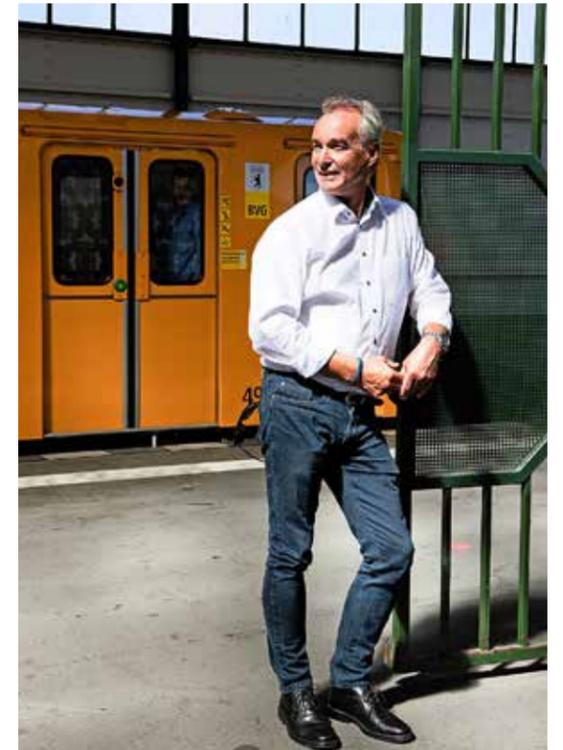
of the BVG strategy: the service channels used to notify followers of line closures, delays, strikes and the like.

Emergency: A passenger has left vital medication on a bus. Thilo Stracke immediately grabs his cellphone. The 33-year-old is a team leader and plans formats such as «driver-generated content» - and something more: «We are the BVG's digital social workers.»

On Equal Pay Day, for example, when BVG sold tickets to women at a 21 percent discount, transgender people complained to Stracke's team. How would the BVG know you felt like a woman? Stracke grins: «Live by the zeitgeist, die by the zeitgeist.»

On this hot day, the team is plagued by a different sort of complaints: lack of air conditioning, saunas on wheels. «A seasonal gripe,» says staffer Christopher Lück (34) with a Berlin accent. He is scanning Twitter and looking into the e-mail inbox. Some days, there are hundreds of messages. Some of them seethe with rage. «One man wrote that we must hire apes to drive the subway trains,» recalls Lück. The team replied: «Thank you, we'll be happy to consider your application.» Berlin lip.

Stracke and his team, which will soon comprise 20 people, collabo- ▶



BVG head of marketing Frank Büch: «A campaign in Zurich or Munich would look different. But anyone can have character and show it.»



Copywriter Finn Kirchner from the social team of the «Because we love you» channels: «Other companies could learn something from our presence.»



Christian Artopé (2nd from right) at the agency GUD and up to 15 coworkers look after their client BVG.

rate with the second pillar of the social media strategy, people who go much further than the reply to the ape post: A team of four professional copywriters freelancing for BVG who handle the «Because we love you» channels: the core of BVG's social media success.

When, for example, a user writes in street slang that he will be riding without a ticket, this team tweets that fare-dodging can get you fined 60 euros. «Or, as you would-be rappers would say, a month's wages». A user who calls the BVG a «society of sons of bitches» is corrected: BVG is a public-law entity of sons of bitches.

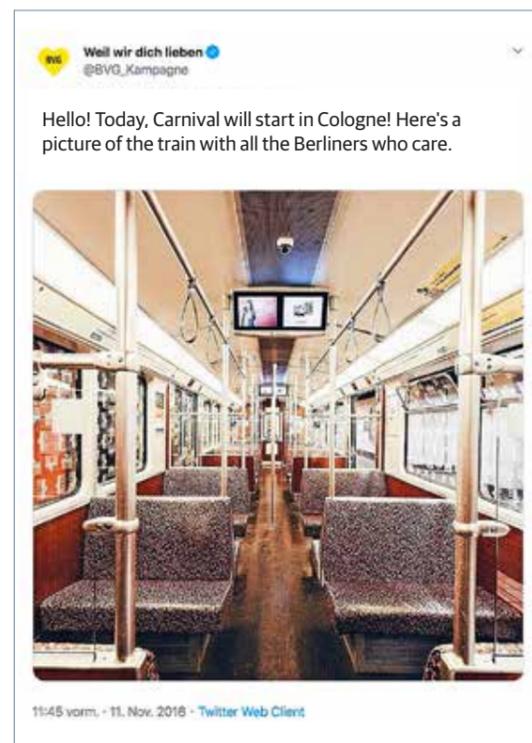
Finn Kirchner, who works for agencies as a concept developer, has been there from the very beginning. DOMO reaches him by phone, at home. Office is where the laptop is. Every working day, Kirchner scans what is written to the BVG via social media, and where links to BVG have been posted. No day is like any other, today, they have already had a man with a beehive riding on the streetcar, which Kirchner calls «Berlin in miniature».

Replies he writes without consult-

ing with anyone. Posts, however, are discussed at the freelancers' weekly editorial meetings. Online, he dons a role, he says: «The tone is based on the Berlin lip we all know from bus drivers,» says the 36-year-old. The BVG buses actually got Kirchner his job. He had posted a hate page about a bus line on Facebook. «In Berlin, hate and humor are often bedfellows,» explains Kirchner. Anger indicates interest. The advertising agency GUD, whose biggest customer is BVG, took an interest in Kirchner.

GUD sits between prefabricated buildings, galleries and a naturopathic practice in a Berlin-Mitte courtyard. A man with sporty glasses and a smartwatch is standing in a room with whitewashed brickwork. His name is Christian Artopé, 46, partner and managing director. Up to 15 GUD employees work on the BVG campaign. When new image posts are developed, they are discussed with the BVG. BVG generally tests how picture posts are received. If a post is rejected by five to ten percent of the test audience, it is put on the web. The stuff of controversy.

BVG approached the agency at the



Daily business: Taking Berlin culture for a ride.

Photos: Finn Kirchner

end of 2014. «Because we love you» had already been decided on. Artopé found the slogan «daring», he says. He remembered how the New York Police Department had asked the web community to share great photos and experiences under #iloveNYPD. People shared pictures of police violence. Welcome to the shitstorm.

That's why it was clear to Artopé: «If you're 100 percent serious about this, it'll go down the drain. The tonality must comprise self-irony.» Irony? PR consultants and editors-in-chief would shudder at the idea. Artopé and his team turned it into a triumph.

Building on the tonality of the social media team, the Jung von Matt agency developed «Alles Absicht» («They do it on purpose»). In this video, an employee explains the price of BVG season tickets with the enormous effort behind it. He shows, for example, how a squirrel determines by means of a nut lottery which line will be delayed today. How bus drivers train to shut doors as closely as possible in a hurriedly approaching passenger's face. The video went viral.

the time will sometimes miss the mark. When the airline Air Berlin went bust, BVG posted an airplane in BVG's own white and yellow colors. They would take on the airline's passengers. Many people found that in poor taste.

«A typical borderline case,» says Artopé. «But it would be boring always to play it perfectly safe.» And an aggressive post may in fact bear fruit. One passenger complained via Twitter about bad music on the subway line U2. The reply on the «Because we love you» channel alluded to the band U2: What did he expect riding on a U2 train?

«The people at Universal thought it was funny,» Büch recalls. Later, the band U2 played at different stops of the homonymous Berlin line. A huge PR gag that even got BVG mentioned in the New York Times. A sporting goods manufacturer took notice: At the beginning of 2018, 500 pairs of Adidas shoes were sold - with a BVG annual season ticket sewn in and patterned like the BVG seat covers. The shoe fit: BVG scored close to eleven billion media impressions. Eleven bil-li-on.

«It would be boring always to play it perfectly safe.»

Christian Artopé, Managing Director GUD

Creativity thrives in freedom. There are no ratings they have to get. «There are no hard KPIs at BVG, but the two central values of coverage and image are continuously measured,» says Artopé. The only guideline: no politics!

Really? When the German Social Democrats did disastrously in the European elections, the team posted a picture of a Berlin Underground bridge from below. The caption read: «Berlin as the SPD sees it.» Büch over at the Gleisdreieck was contacted by the political department. The red-red-green government of Berlin, which owns the BVG, didn't find this at all funny. «Where is the line between social debate and politics?» Artopé says in his defense.

Anyone who tries to be funny all

But can all of this really be turned into money? Marketing boss Büch: «Two to three percent annual growth can be achieved with season-ticket campaigns. Thanks to our last season-ticket campaign in 2018 we sold around 20,000 more subscriptions than usual.»

Can the concept be transferred to other companies? «A campaign in Munich or Zurich would look different,» says Büch. «But anyone can have character and show it.»

Social media expert Kirchner takes a similar view. «To take a step back from yourself, to reflect on yourself and to respect client perception» were things other brands and companies would certainly do well to learn.



Bluff and banter between a BVG customer and their Twitter team. BVG employees had found the man's money (Potte) but he is warned of fare-dodging on his way to pick it up.



Wordplay as a profession. The social media team takes current events and makes fun of them. Here, they make fun of cocaine use at the Berlin fashion fair.

Ringier's best photos of the last quarter

Six pictures and their stories: A fallen hero, a mountaineer in the horizontal and the unfathomable horror of the Alexandra Macesanu case.

STYLE
MICHA FREUTEL
SUSANNE MÄRKI
 Photographer
 Editor



It takes a moment for the eye to realize what it is seeing. And that is quite deliberate. Because the fashion feature «Point of View» in **Style** magazine is playing with different, sometimes unusual perspectives. In this instance, photographer Micha Freutel sent a drone flying high above the Zurich University of the Arts. On the left, in the dark, is the square in front of the building. And lying on the roof terrace, maybe not entirely comfortably, is the model. Wearing a monochrome outfit by the Italian fashion label Max Mara. The photo shoot was conceived by Fashion Director Laura Catrina: «For this feature, we sometimes photographed the model close-up from below, then again from far away. The selection of outfits in signal colors and playing around with near and far, big and small, this combination makes our pictorial piece special.»

LIBERTATEA
VLAD CHIREA
 Photographer & editor



«He's coming, he's coming!» Those were the last words ever heard from Alexandra Macesanu. It was her desperate call for help to the police. The day before, the 15-year-old had been kidnapped while hitchhiking on her way to the Romanian town of Caracal. «Please stay on the phone with me, I'm scared,» she begged the policeman talking to her. But the policeman told her to clear the line. It took another 19 hours for the police to start looking for the girl. By the time they found her, it was too late. Alexandra had been raped and then murdered by her kidnapper Gheorghe Dinca. He later confessed to the murder of another girl. The case sparked great indignation and demonstrations against the police in Romania. People from all over the country made a pilgrimage to the «House of Horror» to leave flowers and letters for the victims. A small chink in the garden fence of Dinca's house was enough for **Libertatea** photographer Vlad Chirea to capture the dread. That's all it takes.

BLIC
SNEŽANA KRSTIĆ
SLOBODAN PIKULA
 Photographer
 Editor



Immovable, the statue of the Pobednik, the monument to the victor, stood in the Belgrade fortress Kalemegdan—for 91 years. A symbol of the Serbian capital, at 46 feet high it was part of the cityscape. It was erected in commemoration of the victories over the Ottoman Empire in the First Balkans War and on the Serbian front against Austria-Hungary in the First World War. And now, the proud victor has fallen. Shipped off to the small town of Smederevo, to the studio of sculptor Zoran Kuzmanovic. He has been commissioned to restore the statue to its former resplendent glory before returning it to its site. Too bad, really. Only now, thanks to photographer Snezana Krstic of **Blic**, can we see how beautiful and vulnerable even great victors are when they are not looking down on everyone.

L'ILLUSTRÉ
SÉBASTIEN AGNETTI
NATALIA MOTTIER
 Photographer
 Editor



What if the French-speaking part of Switzerland were to send only women to parliament? **L'illustré's** editorial team performed this thought experiment prior to the federal elections – and turned it into a story. Photo editor Natalia Mottier was commissioned to design a cover picture – for almost 50 women! «Photographer Sébastien Agnetti and I decided to set the women up on a scaffold,» says Mottier. Thanks to the support of enthusiastic companies, they managed to place a 20-foot scaffold in a 54,000-square-foot hall. Forty female members of parliament and candidates from all parties came together for the photo shoot despite the stress of the election campaign. Photographer Agnetti gave his instructions with a megaphone. «Working on this picture was an unforgettable experience,» says photo editor Natalia Mottier. And maybe the picture played its part in getting more women elected to parliament than ever before.

BERGLIEBE
THOMAS SENF
DENISE ZURKIRCH
 Photographer
 Editor



It is Switzerland's most spectacular granite needle. And the symbol of the Bregaglia valley: the «Fiamma». It is called «Fiamma» by the locals because it looks like a petrified flame. The Fiamma is slim, hard as iron and 74 feet high. It is therefore an irresistible challenge for good climbers. Photographer Thomas Senf accompanied the mountain guide Marcel Schenk to the granite needle for **BergLiebe**. As if the terrain weren't already difficult enough, Senf carried not only his photographic equipment but also a drone. It was worth it. Because on top of the Fiamma, Marcel Schenk skillfully made a spectacle of himself by performing the «human flag». At least he is secured as he goes horizontal in the perpendicular: Natascha Knecht, the editor of **BergLiebe**, while not visible in the picture, is also on site. She is holding him by a line in case of an emergency. Unnecessary. Because Marcel Schenk has everything under control. «Still, I wouldn't recommend trying this stunt yourself,» says Knecht.

L'ILLUSTRÉ
VALENTIN FLAURAUD
JULIE BODY
 Photographer
 Editor



For four months, 894 sheep have enjoyed free grazing. They are scattered around the Aletsch area up to an elevation of 10,000 feet above sea level. At the end of summer, ten young men from the town of Naters herd the animals together to bring them back to their owners down on Belalp. It takes them three days to even find the animals, mainly Valais Blacknose sheep. Sometimes they risk life and limb to catch them. And the cattle drive down from the alps is even more trying for man and beast. Because the path to Belalp is lined with deep gorges and steep slopes. Photographer Valentin Flauraud accompanied the men and the sheep for **L'illustré** throughout the experience. «An unforgettable time, but hard work,» says Flauraud. Deploying a drone, he achieved exactly what he had set out to do before embarking on the assignment: to show this spectacle from a new perspective – with breathtaking perfection.





Making Women Visible

More women in media coverage. That is the purpose of the «EqualVoice» initiative. And that goes for Ringier, too. «EqualVoice allows us to provide a platform for this important issue,» says initiator Annabella Bassler.

By Katia Murmann

Of all articles in Swiss media, 75 percent are about men. As the Global Media Monitoring Project 2016 shows, the figure worldwide is as much as 82 percent. The statistics are three years old - but not much has changed since then. On Blick.ch, the ratio is currently 75 percent men and 25 percent women.

This raises a lot of questions: Are there no women worth reporting on? Do men make for better headlines? Or is the ratio in the media simply a reflection of reality, where women are less represented on the executive floor?

The fact is that scientists are speaking of a «gender content gap». This issue is widely discussed - also at Ringier as a global media house. «We want to position men and women more equally in our media,» says Annabella Bassler, Chief Financial Officer of Ringier AG. She has launched the «EqualVoice» initiative, which is intended to have an impact both inside and outside the company and is chaired by publisher Michael Ringier and CEO Marc Walder.

«We want EqualVoice to make women more visible in media coverage,» explains Marc Walder. The core of the initiative is the

«According to the Advance & HSG Gender Intelligence Report, 65 percent of all promotions in Switzerland still go to men. The share of women in upper and top management is just 18 percent. The EqualVoice initiative is also intended to produce internal measures to promote equality and equal opportunity in our companies.»

Sabina Hanselmann-Diethelm, Editor-in-chief Style/Bolero



«We want to position men and women more equally in our media.»

Annabella Bassler, CFO Ringier AG and EqualVoice initiator



EqualVoice Factor. It measures how many men and women are represented on our websites and in the articles (see box). It provides the editorial offices with a database for the development and implementation of measures.

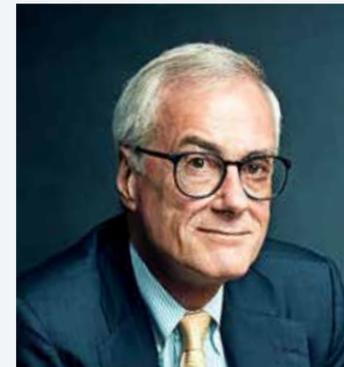
«The goal is not to have 50 percent men and 50 percent women in all titles all of a sudden,» says Walder. Journalists are not activists, and each title has its own DNA which needs to be protected. Rather, it is about the editors-in-chief sensitizing their teams to the issue. «We are convinced that men and women can achieve much more together than men or women by themselves; and, there are more women worth reporting on.»

Numerous Ringier editorial offices were already dealing with this issue before the advent of EqualVoice. BLICK regularly focuses on topics that matter to women. Blick.ch editor-in-chief Katia Murmann initiated the joint «edit-a-thon» with Swiss Radio and Television SRF and Wikipedia, which brings women's biographies to Wikipedia.

At Beobachter magazine, a team of editors regularly assess the gender ratio in the content and make sure this relationship is discussed at the editorial meetings. The issue also factors into the daily editorial work at Schweizer Illustrierte and the business media.

«There are already so many good measures,» says Annabella Bassler. «With EqualVoice, we want to pool our strengths, learn from each other and provide a platform for this important issue.»

The initiative was presented to all employees on November 25. Project teams will now be put together in each editorial office to deal with the questions, what does EqualVoice mean for each title - and how can we implement EqualVoice in our daily business? Publisher Michael Ringier: «EqualVoice provides an excellent journalistic opportunity to discover new and exciting faces. Join in!»



«EqualVoice provides an excellent journalistic opportunity to discover new and exciting faces. Join in!»
Michael Ringier, Publisher



Katia Murmann, Editor-in-chief Digital at Blick Group

Katia Murmann explains EqualVoice

«The EqualVoice Factor shows how visible women and men are on the Ringier and Ringier Axel Springer websites and in our articles. Our data tool Sherlock counts the number of women and men in each online article. This results in two scores: The teaser score, consisting of image, superheadline, headline, lead. It tells us: How visible are women on our pages? And secondly, the body score, which refers to the body of the article. It tells us: How often do women get to speak?»

The people in the pictures are identified with Amazon Recognition. The algorithms and the quality of the data are regularly checked by our data specialists and editors - and they are constantly learning new things.»

EQUALVOICE
by Ringier



«More and more women are taking on executive duties, and we want to offer them a platform. Because diversity brings companies forward - and we want to do our share.»
Stefan Barmettler, Editor-in-chief Handelszeitung



«Both as a magazine and as an institution, Beobachter has always stood for fairness and equal opportunities. Still, there is the risk of falling into the trap of convention. When we are looking for interview

partners or experts for example, well-known men may be suggested more quickly than women who are as yet less well-known but equally competent. EqualVoice can sensitize us and help us overcome such conventions by paying more attention to these choices in our daily work.»

Andres Büchi, Editor-in-chief Beobachter

I Am Sailing ...

... Rod Stewart liked to croon. In search of new sources of revenue, «Blick» is banking on events like «Stars auf See» (Stars at Sea). While the money is not pouring in just yet, they are surfing on a wave of success – thanks to the popularity of cruises and Schlager music. Text: René Haenig Photos: Olivia Pulver, Sigggi Bucher



If you want to yodel on the high seas, you first have to let your shoulders slouch. Or as Barbara Klossner, 39, aka «Miss Helvetia» puts it in her broad Bernese backwoods dialect: «D Schouteri la gheie.» This afternoon, the yodeler and singer has lured about 80 yodeling enthusiasts to the Grand Bar Orpheus on deck 6 of the cruise ship Costa Victoria - for a yodel workshop. Now, casually dressed people both young and old are standing in a semicircle around the woman in traditional costume, making «theatrical-shocking faces» on her command, then abusing their cheeks with their tongues at her instruction - before finally, as in a choir rehearsal, voicing at her behest first a «Mamamamaaaaa», followed by a «Memememeeee» and a «Moomoomoomoooooo». «Yodeling is a high-performance sport,» Miss Helvetia explains to her students.

«The owl and the pussycat went to sea in a beautiful pea-green boat ...», according to the old nursery rhyme. The Costa Victoria is not pea-green but it is beautiful - and a lot of fun in October. The motto of this Mediterranean cruise initiated by Blick and the travel agency Hotelplan is: «Stars at Sea - From Schlager to Volksrock». On-board entertainment will be provided by just about every star of the genre from Switzerland, Austria and Germany - from Beatrice Egli and Francine Jordi to Florian Ast, DJ Ötzi, Die jungen Zillertaler and Miss Helvetia to the four boys of Rebell Tell, the band that recently even caused Dieter Bohlen, perennial judge on the RTL casting show «Das Supertalent» and legendary for his hazing of candidates, to go nuts for their rocky Schlagerbilly sound.

The Schlager ship's route takes it from Venice via Brindisi first to the Greek port of Kefalonia, from there to Saranda in Albania and on into the fjord-like bay of Kotor in Montenegro, lined by high and steep mountainsides, with its medieval town, which was already included in the Unesco World Cultural and Natural Heritage List in 1979. The last stop before returning to Italy is «the most beautiful city in the world», Split. At least this is what the inhabitants of the city say. It was built in the 4th century by the Roman Emperor Diocletian and is now part of Croatia.

The eight-day music cruise is a highlight of Blick's anniversary year. The tabloid's first issue was pub-



«We're investing in the future and strengthening our brand.»

Nicolas Pernet, Head Publishing and New Business Blick Group



«It was a strategic decision to co-organize the event,» says Nicolas Pernet, 39, Head of Publishing and New Business at the Blick Group. For some time now, in view of declining advertising and reader market revenues, Ringier's second mainstay has been revenues from other activities unrelated to the core business. The Swiss Jass Playing Championship presented by Blick and the Swiss Lottery Swisslos is one example - and so is «Stars at Sea».

But why Schlager music, of all things? Pernet offers a simple and plausible explanation. «Stories from the Schlager industry meet with extremely great interest from readers of the daily newspaper as well as online at Blick.ch.» This becomes readily apparent when the tickets are raffled off. In addition, the market for cruises has steadily grown in recent years. «If you put these two factors together, you get the Schlager ship.» In Switzerland alone, the number ▶

lished in Switzerland 60 years ago, in mid-October 1959.

Three years of planning went into this one week at sea, as Christian Dorer, 44, editor-in-chief of the Blick Group, writes in his letter welcoming the approximately 1,100 cruise guests aboard. For the first time, Blick has organized the event in tandem with Hotelplan; for last year's Schlager ship, the tabloid was «only» involved as a media partner.

A yodel workshop with Miss Helvetia (top). Blick editor-in-chief Christian Dorer with Swiss Schlager music star Beatrice Egli. And Francine Jordi fans sing along with their idol (bottom).

«The real work is in the preparations, the show itself is a pleasure.»

Singer Beatrice Egli

of cruise passengers has more than doubled within ten years. Last year, 150,000 people boarded a cruise ship. And there is no sign of this upswing abating.

But before we get out of the harbor and into the fun, we have to wait for the launch on Saturday. The embarkation of the passengers should have begun at 1 p.m. But the Costa Victoria arrives late at the terminal. The reason: Venice's city government has started to let the cruise giants enter the port for a limited time only. The gigantic ships have been a burden on the lagoon for years and are a source of strife not only for the inhabitants of the Most Serene Republic. This does not dampen the exuberant mood of the gradually growing number of passengers. The sound of Schlager music is blaring through the terminal - canned, for now. Although we are still on land, there is already a lot of rocking and swaying going on.

It's not only senior citizens and country bumpkins crowding through the hall along to «Atemlos durch die Nacht» by Schlager queen Helene Fischer or «Le Li La» by folk-music favorite Beatrice Egli. Schlager music is very popular. According to a new survey on Schlager music popularity in 2019, among the German-speaking population about 14.9 million people aged 14 and over are very fond of listening to German Schlager music. That's one in five.

Joelina Gisel is 22 years old, loves Schlager and takes part in the yodeling workshop. The young woman heard Miss Helvetia the day before at the pool concert on the deck of the Costa Victoria. «She gets everyone into a great mood,» she says. Gisel herself has been taking singing lessons for a year and a half and could now imagine carrying on with yodeling. «It's great fun,» says Annabeth Kubli. She is usually more into singing classical music, the 59-year-old tells us. And Silvio Zaniolo, 67, who has been making music as part of a male choir for 23 years, is also full of praise for this «completely new experience».



It must cost around two million dollars to charter a cruise ship as large as the 827-foot Costa Victoria. Neither Blick nor Hotelplan will name exact figures. Does this pay off for the Blick Group? «At least we're not making a loss,» says Nicolas Pernet. It's not a matter of making a quick one-off profit, but of building

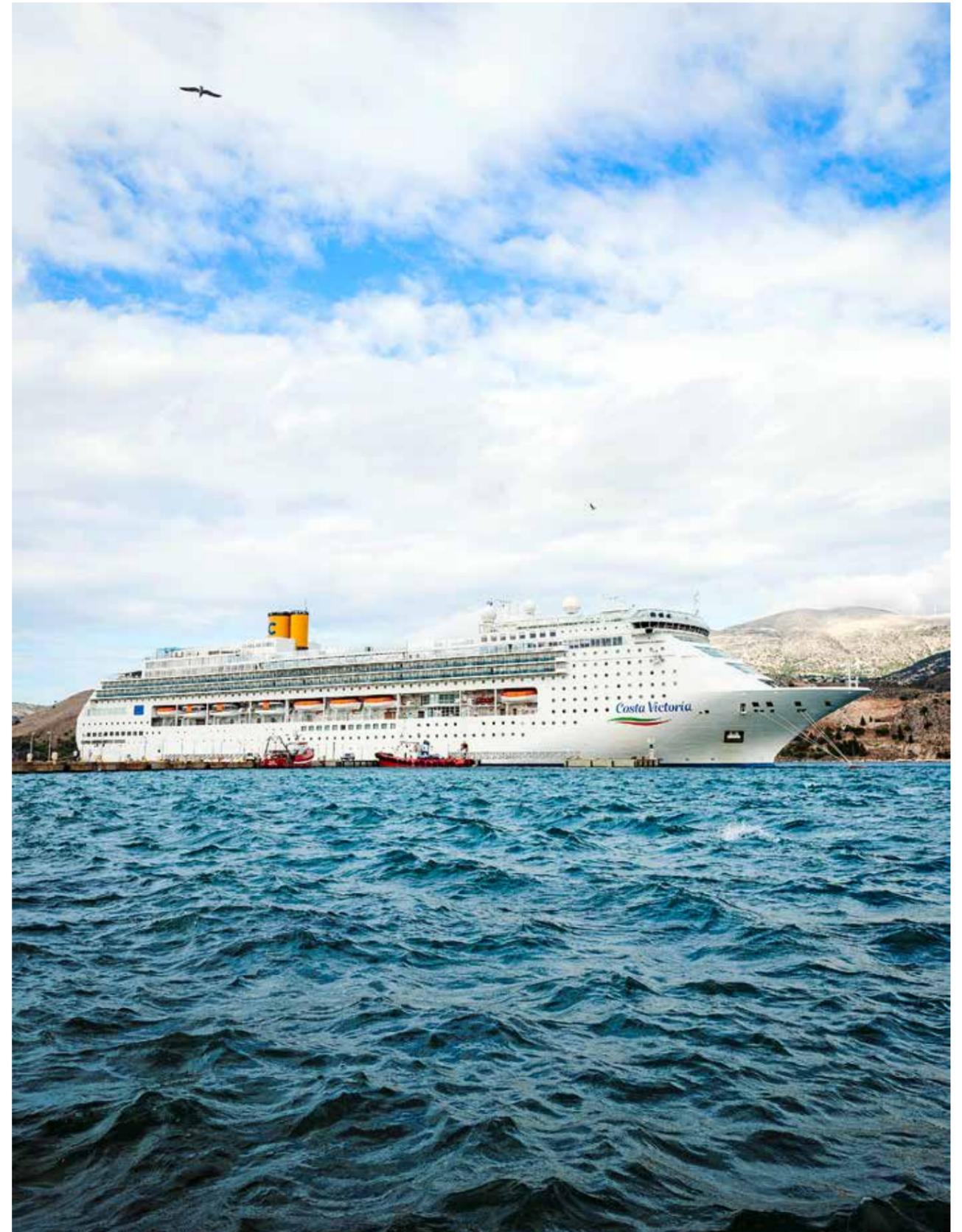
Whether it's Beatrice Egli (top) or Miss Helvetia - everybody wants their autograph. DJ Ötzi rocks the cruise ship in the evenings (bottom).

up the «Stars at Sea» brand in order to make money in the long term. «That takes time,» says Pernet. Someday after the return of the Costa Victoria they will sit down with their partner Hotelplan in order to discuss the plan of action. «It is conceivable that we will send out a Schlager ship every two years.»

Hundreds are queuing up on deck 7 in the Capriccio Bar, to get an autograph from Beatrice Egli, 31. According to the platform schlager.de, the 2013 winner of the German casting show «Deutschland sucht den Superstar» is the second most popular Schlager singer after Helene Fischer. Noa Hutzli has already met her idol at least 20 times. «We do recognize each other when we meet.» The twelve-year-old has crafted a card game especially for Egli - as a gift. The singer wrote something in Noa's diary as a thank you. What exactly? «I don't want to reveal that,» says Noa. Cornelia Kuhn, 46, is also patiently waiting with a sweater clamped under her arm to have it signed. This treasured item is one of her first fan souvenirs of Egli. She is not afraid that the autograph might vanish or blur when she next washes it. Before she puts the signed sweater in the washing machine she will iron it three or four times. «That's old housewives' know-how,» she explains to the baffled reporter.

Speaking of reporters - Michel Imhof, 27, is reporting daily for Blick from aboard the ship in his «log-book». His first headline after the Costa Victoria left Venice reads «Schlager Ship Heaving to Starboard». The text is adorned with a photo by Linda Fäh. The pop singer and former Miss Switzerland not only sings on board, but also sends a wake-up call through the ship's loudspeakers every morning as the cruise's «good-mood captain». Reporter Imhof, himself a Schlager music fan, knows all the stars personally. His personal highlight on board? «The story of the Beatrice Egli fans from Mississippi.» The married couple Lavell, 67, and Julie Brown, 64, came from the USA especially because of the Swiss Schlager singer. Imhof spontaneously set up a meeting of the retired couple with Egli on the ship. «This is the best day of this trip,» says Lavell Brown, visibly moved.

If you are a fan and want to be even closer to your idols than at the breakfast table or the lunch buffet, all you have to do is stray to the ►





«Everything is so relaxed here! I don't feel at all crowded.»

Singer Vincent Gross

aperitif bar on deck 11. Here, in the evenings, DJ Ötzi, 48, and his buddy Florian Ast, 44, discuss new songs, singer Vincent Gross plays a round of table football with fans, while nostalgia rocker Ralph «Räp» Güntlisberger philosophizes about love over a beer. «That is the beauty at this journey,» says singer Francine Jordi, «we come into contact with our audience more than at any other gig.»

Somewhere off the Albanian coast, on deck 6 of the cruise giant Costa Victoria, 80 men and women



are yodeling through the Grand Bar Orpheus in the late afternoon. Miss Helvetia has done it again - the workshop's participants are happy. She has been giving yodeling courses for twelve years. In all this time, there

Sun, singing and sipping champagne - Schlager music fans know how to party at «Stars at Sea».

were no more than ten people to whom she had to say: «I'm sorry, but you're no good at this». But on «Stars at Sea», everyone gets to be a little yodeling star. 🌐

Analog Ethics



Michael Ringier, Publisher

The scene of the crime is a gas station in Küsnacht, my place of residence. Very popular on Sundays, because it includes the only shop that also sells food on holidays. As a result, business is lively on this Sunday, and I must count myself lucky to have obtained a regular parking space with a view of everything that's going on. The perfect place for a brief lesson in behavioral research while I am waiting for my daughter, who is shopping.

As parking spaces are in short supply, the law of the quickest and the most brazen appears to apply. A driver in front of me has realized that only hurried backing-up will give him the

chance to park his car properly by occupying a newly vacated space. So, he goes about this without caring a fig about whether another car is standing behind him. Only by intense honking is a major fender bender averted. In lieu of an apology, the culprit emits only abuse, underlined by unequivocal hand gestures. At least he has parked his car in a regular spot.

Most of the other potential shoppers pay no heed to any of this. Parking has absolute priority and civility can take a back seat. That is why the only way to reach the exit past the gas pumps is constantly blocked by improperly parked cars. Let everyone else figure out how to get to the road. But that kind of impudence not only wins out, it can even be topped: You simply park your ride at the gas pump and go shopping, without buying gas. The queue behind your car doesn't even rate a conciliatory smile when you return.

The space next to mine becomes available. An SUV driver backs up into it at lightning speed, maneuvering in such a way that I fear for the paintwork on my car. She has left less than four inches between our cars; there's no question of opening the door. Instead of driving forward and then back again, she finds a quicker way out: She exits on the passenger side, handily leaving the access problem with me.

What I have witnessed within fifteen minutes as an everyday phe-

nomenon in one of the world's wealthiest communities is sobering, to put it mildly. Too many people absolutely put their own interests first - even if civility or politeness fall by the wayside. But why am I even writing about this?

Because the Internet is teeming with moralizers. When Michelle Hunziker posts a picture on Instagram in which she wears an edelweiss in her buttonhole, she receives masses of admonitions from self-styled botanists. When a Berlin undersecretary has her picture taken wearing a Rolex, her social democratic base flies into a rage, quickly creating the hashtag «Watchgate». When a supermarket chain sells sliced tomatoes wrapped in cellophane, the photo is shared thousands of times on Twitter and Facebook, and everyone wallows in indignation. And if an artist is alleged and in no way proven to have behaved improperly towards his girlfriend, people call for his works to be removed from an exhibition. Oh, how ethical we are.

The amount of digital finger-wagging has become intolerable. Digital indignation and analog selfishness are a cozy new couple with a big network. Or is it not so novel after all? «L'enfer, c'est les autres,» French philosopher and novelist Jean-Paul Sartre has his character Garcin say. His play «Huis Clos» premiered before the advent of television.

Michael Ringier

«Because the job gives me pleasure»

He has the most beautiful and the second most beautiful job in the world. Nevertheless, BLICK editor-in-chief Christian Dorer is sometimes in a bad mood. Jogging helps!



MONDAY

The imminent launch of Blick TV is the biggest change in the Blick Group since the introduction of Switzerland's first newsroom - or, as CEO Marc Walder says, since the launch of SonntagsBlick, exactly 50 years ago! At the moment we are putting the team together, designing programs and setting up the new studios. The digital television channel will revolutionize the entire newsroom: How do we want to work in the future so that TV, online and print appear as one? In the middle of the construction site, I'm talking to Jonas Projer, editor-in-chief of Blick TV, and Katia Murmann, editor-in-chief of Blick.ch.

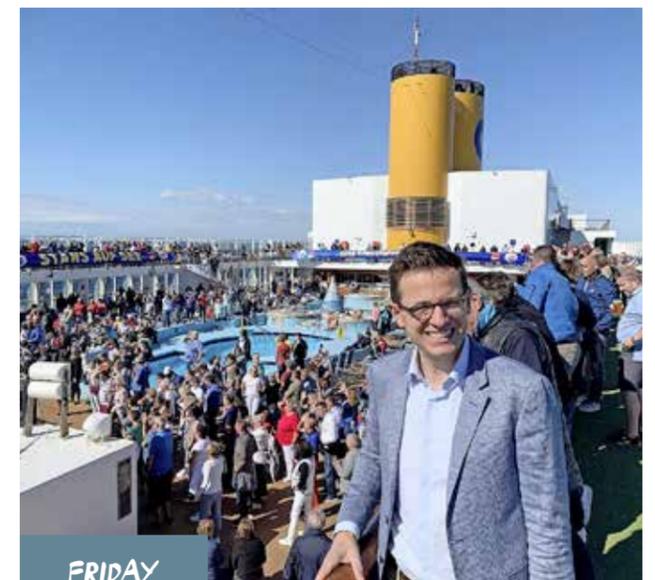
TUESDAY In all projects, management tasks and representative duties, I make sure that journalism as such is not neglected in my everyday life. I love to take part in the discussions at the editorial meeting. Every Saturday I write BlickPunkt, a commentary on the most important topic of the week, and conduct interviews with interesting or important personalities. Today we have a slightly larger editorial meeting: the Plenary Assembly. The entire newsroom team, around 200 employees, show up there. When it comes to TV, we bring everyone up to date.



WEDNESDAY

If I'm not allowed to move, I get fidgety at some point; some would say: obnoxious. That's why I schedule a jogging session twice a week at lunchtime. Either I run along the lake (9.5 km) or do the "mountain tour", along the Wehrenbach to Tiefenbrunnen (8.5 km). Roman Sigrist is one of my most important employees as Head of Operations and Projects in the Chief Editorial Office. We often get the best ideas on how to solve one problem or the other while running. By the way, Roman is so fit that he pulls me along even on bad days.

THURSDAY Everybody who is anybody visits us in the newsroom: politicians, business leaders, stars from entertainment and sports, colleagues from other media. Sometimes they even make a newspaper and online review - in front of the entire editorial staff. In this picture, Federal Councilor Karin Keller-Sutter asks print editor-in-chief Andreas Dietrich what the BLICK of tomorrow will look like. Our workplace is a living organism, constantly evolving. This makes us not only the oldest newsroom in Switzerland, but also the most modern. Print, online and soon TV production flow into each other here.



FRIDAY

Where do I have the opportunity to meet more than 1000 readers at the same time? During the BLICK cruise "Stars at Sea" in the Mediterranean! So I make a detour to the south and ride from Venice to Brindisi. I greet the guests, moderate a Schlager talk - and for once, the meet and greet on the deck of the Costa Victoria is not with the skipper but with the captain of the Blick group.



WEEKEND



I live in Baden - in a semi-detached house from 1928. I prefer to spend the weekends with friends or my godchildren Sophie (10) and Julian (6). Here I am invited to the open day of a construction company. Julian is allowed to operate a crane - to him that is the ultimate! And yes, I also have a second job: For 22 years I have been driving a regular bus once a month for the Lenzburg regional transport. I'm one of the longest serving drivers there. Why do I do that? Quite simply: because it gives me great pleasure and is something completely different from my desk job. Bus driver - for me this is the second most beautiful job in the world. Right after editor-in-chief.

«Vietnam will never let me go»

In 1967, Peter Balsiger (78) was a 26-year-old BLICK reporter and travelled to the Vietnam war, which turned him into Switzerland's most famous journalist. And into a pioneer of a new kind of foreign reporting at BLICK. Interview: Adrian Meyer

Mr Balsiger, what does the Vietnam War smell like?

When you land at the airport in Saigon, there is a reek of kerosene. And fear.

Fear?

In Saigon, the American GIs pour out of the troop carriers. They have come directly from the USA, you can see their fear. Then, on the airfield, they meet the soldiers whose one-year tour of duty is over and who are now waiting for the return flight home. The survivors. They know that out of the 150 newcomers, 50 will not return or only return in terrible condition. You can smell that cocktail of emotions.

In 1967, you were a 26-year-old reporter and travelled to the raging Vietnam War. Why?

Very many people have asked me that. Soldiers in such terrible places as Khe Sanh or Hue asked me, why are you here? It would never have occurred to them to go to Vietnam voluntarily. I had trouble explaining myself.

What did you tell them?

The truth. Vietnam was the biggest story of all at the time. I wanted to be there. Everything you got to read about the war back then was boring. Sober reports of casualties or battles. I wanted human interest stories. I wanted to go along with the soldiers, write down how they live and die, what it's like to be in a foxhole or in the jungle. What war feels like.

You were motivated entirely by journalistic ambition?

I also wanted to know, am I a hero? Or a coward in the face of danger? Back then, I asked myself these childish questions about masculinity.

BLICK's editorial team was not enthusiastic.

They thought I was crazy. I had to take unpaid leave and pay for all my expenses. The Swissair ticket to Bangkok then cost 4,200 francs, a large chunk of my savings.

It was worth all that to you?

All of it.



Peter Balsiger at the BLICK archive: «Vietnam was the biggest story of all.»

Were you prepared for what you were to experience?

Not at all. I arrived with naïve ideas and full of enthusiasm. Everything was thrilling and an adventure. I got to fly on fighter planes, in helicopters across the rice paddies into the sunset, I rode in patrol boats on the Mekong. I blindly launched myself into any kind of military adventure.

When did you become aware of the cruel reality of war?

On my first combat mission. I went on a search-and-destroy mission with a company, and we were ambushed by the North Vietnamese. We came under fire, men were wounded right next to me. Some screamed for their mother. They were all scared to

death. That was when I realized, so this is war.

Would you have fired?

I came close. The lieutenant thrust an M-16 into my hand and told me to just pull the trigger. It was the gun of a wounded soldier. If the enemy had come at that moment, I would have fired. Thank God no one came.

Were you afraid?

Anyone who says he wasn't afraid in Vietnam is lying. The fear was always there. Nevertheless, I grew terribly numb, got used to the horrible images. Violence became normal.

How did you escape that ambush?

At some point, US jets dropped napalm bombs and the artillery fired at the enemy positions. That night, we retreated up a mountain. They slung two rifles around me and gave me ammunition boxes to carry. We were on the road for hours and came under fire again and again. I was completely exhausted. It was all about sheer survival. It was anything but heroic.

You stayed in the war for two months and wrote a series of articles that turned into a successful book. A few months later, you returned to Vietnam and stayed for another eight months. Why?

Because after the Tet offensive in 1968, it looked as though the Americans might lose the war. Nobody could have imagined that before. I wanted to go back. I knew they were making history there.

What was your most dangerous piece of research?

My involvement in the battle of Khe Sanh, a jungle fortress encircled by the North Vietnamese. One day before I wanted to fly there, an airplane with Canadian journalists on board was shot down on approach. So, I thought, is it worth doing this?

You went anyway. Were you a war junkie?

Anyone who has ever walked the thin line between life and death knows that this puts you into an incomparable state. You live



Peter Balsiger (second from left) after his return. «I became the most famous journalist in Switzerland.»



«The fear was always there. Nevertheless, I grew terribly numb,» says Peter Balsiger.

totally in the moment. That is an effect I have sought again and again.

In what way?

I went on to chase after those feelings for a long time. But I never experienced them the way I did in Vietnam. At some point, I discovered Buddhism. That was when I realized I could have the feeling of living in the moment without war.

Did you feel like a hero in Vietnam?

No. But it shaped my image. Vietnam Balsiger in uniform, with dirt on his face and a helmet on his head. I'm not proud of it. I didn't mean to impress anyone, I thought that's who I am. That's how I have to live. BLICK then oversold this image. Thanks to my Vietnam articles I became the most famous journalist in Switzerland.

What was it like to return to the orderly

everyday life of Switzerland?

Very difficult. Actually, I wanted to stay in Vietnam. But the editors thought it was time to return.

Where did your passion for adventure come from?

I grew up in Wangen an der Aare, my parents were poor. The boys in the village had no chance to break out. I soon realized that this could not be my life. As a teenager I read the book «Kon-Tiki» by the adventurer Thor Heyerdahl. Then I knew there was another world out there.

Is that why you joined BLICK?

I was studying law and found it terribly boring. I was also working for the news agency UPI. One day, BLICK editor-in-chief Charles La Roche called me and asked if I didn't want to join BLICK. They were look-

ing for someone to do the foreign reporting. I immediately agreed and chucked everything, studies, officer candidate school and my completely outdated ideas of a career. My first assignment at BLICK was the Six-Day War in 1967.

BLICK didn't have the best reputation.

It had a bad reputation with the so-called refined society and our colleagues of the established press. A gutter paper! An acquaintance warned me, if you go there, you can forget about a career with a serious newspaper.

What attracted you to BLICK?

BLICK gave us incredible opportunities and freedom! The «Neue Zürcher Zeitung» would never have sent a reporter to Vietnam for months. BLICK was modern, immersed in what was happening. We were allowed to break taboos, buck trends, tackle tricky topics and provoke. We banked on human interest and emotions. That made us stand out from the others, it made us unmistakable and successful.

What sort of people worked in the editorial office at the time?

We were a motley bunch. Young college dropouts like me who found life at the university bland. Older journalists with an often obscure history but with a lot of life experience and a large network of relationships. An ex-policeman with excellent connections to the red-light district. A private detective from Zurich who used to perform as a blond wrestler. A party-goer with a PhD, who knew almost all the secrets of the stars. We were outsiders, ostracized by the serious journalists. That bound us together.

You went on to become editor-in-chief of BLICK, SonntagsBlick, l'illustré, Schweizer Illustrierte and the magazines «Quick» and «SUPERillu». What shaped you most?

Vietnam. It was an existential experience. I didn't really enjoy being BLICK's editor-in-chief. I grew cynical. And I have to say in retrospect, I didn't do BLICK well. I never wanted to be a political journalist. I never cared what happened in Bern. Emotions and human experiences were what fascinated me.

Was Vietnam the highlight of your life?

War reporter Michael Herr wrote in his cult book «Dispatches» that for many journalists, this war was a substitute for a happy youth. That's true. And I'm still processing Vietnam. It will never let me go. 🇇🇵

Biographical note:

Peter Balsiger (78) joined BLICK in 1967. As a war reporter, he went to Vietnam, the Six-Day War and the Biafran War. Later, he became editor-in-chief of BLICK, SonntagsBlick, l'illustré, Schweizer Illustrierte and the magazines «Quick» and «SUPERillu». Peter Balsiger lives in Munich.

Retro Lady with Aloha Spirit

With 45 years of Ringier and 45 years of Tele magazine, hardly anyone knows the Swiss TV landscape as well as Tele editor Gabrielle "Gaby" Jagel. Her passions: «Meeting people and telling their stories.» And: «Hawaii!»

Photos: Geri Born, private



From the telex to the IBM Selectric typewriter to the laptop: Gaby Jagel has experienced many technological changes in her 45 years at Tele. «The TV business has also changed significantly. In the past, some presenters were almost like family members,» she says. Top right: Gaby Jagel in 1981 with colleague Michael Furrer. Bottom right: Gaby Jagel in Hawaii. She has been to the islands 19 times. «Trip number twenty is a sure thing.»

Richard Nixon is still president of the United States. VW is currently selling its first Golf. And in Switzerland you can cycle on the motorway because of (or thanks to) the oil crisis. This is what the world looked like when Gabrielle «Gaby» Jagel, 62, joined Ringier 45 years ago. «On November 25th, 1974, I started working for Tele as a secretary,» she says. And she has remained with Tele to this day.

Getting the job was a stroke of luck at the time. Gaby Jagel had just finished business school and was looking for a job. At the same time her neighbor, the legendary Tele editor-in-chief Herbert «Jack» Stark, was looking for a secretary. «After a brief interview, he told me I would fit in well with the editorial staff.»

In the following years, time and again, Gaby Jagel found herself

working with new bosses - and always new technology. «The first telex was fascinating. The text transmission via acoustic couplers was even a wonder of the world. And with the IBM Selectric typewriter I felt like an empress!» Gaby Jagel's areas of responsibility were also changing. Her next boss, Hans-Ueli Indermaur, was an early promoter of computers and supported Gaby Jagel's career. «Soon I helped in the graphics department, in picture editing and wrote TV program tips.» And at the Tele subsidiary TPS, which still existed at that time, she was senior duty editor.

Her first major article in 2007 led Gaby Jagel to former Federal Councilor Elisabeth Kopp. «That's when I knew what I wanted: to meet people and tell their stories.»

Gaby Jagel's mother was the

first editor at Swiss TV and little Gaby was often at the TV studio as a child. No wonder, she knows every TV personality and every program from the beginnings of television to the present day. Should she forget any, she would get help from the huge Tele archive, which she keeps meticulous and guards as gold. «That's probably why my boss Gion Stecher lovingly calls me retro lady,» she says with a laugh. Her personal TV favorite: «Heidi Abel, a human role model.»

She has another two years until retirement. Gaby Jagel would say she «may» work for another two years before she is retired. Then what? «Traveling is my hobby. I've been to Hawaii 19 times, the Aloha spirit won't let me go. Trip number twenty is therefore a sure thing.»

AV



Editor's Choice

by Marc Walder

Ringier CEO Marc Walder tells you which books he is reading and why they fascinate him.

Yuval Noah Harari

HOMO DEUS

It is a gloomy picture that Yuval Noah Harari paints of the future. It concludes - in the worst-case scenario - with the end of our species. But first things first.

Harari, an Israeli writer and historian, is probably the most exciting representative of the «Big History» school of thought. His book «Sapiens» made him world-famous. In it, he traces the success story of mankind from its beginnings to the present day. In his follow-up «Homo Deus», he expands the historical range: The journey begins in the Stone Age and ends far into the future. And that promises to be quite complicated. Because now that mankind finally has (more or less) managed to rein in war, famine and plagues, there is a lack of vision. All we get are social utopias and models of the future designed in Silicon Valley.

In its search for «immortality, boundless happiness and divine powers of creation», however, mankind will get on the wrong track in the course of the 21st century. New technologies will initially lend human beings godlike abilities - both creative and destructive - and turn Homo sapiens into Homo deus. But over time, machines will replace and surpass people. In the end, a small elite of upgraded super humans at best will benefit. The great majority of people will be (economically) useless. One small comfort: The author says that «Homo Deus» is not a prediction but a presentation of options.

Yuval Noah Harari provides no answers or analyses to current problems. But anyone who wants (and dares) to look at the big picture will be well served by this powerful writer and brilliant thinker.

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